



City of Alpharetta

# Commercial Building Inspection Policies & Procedures

Revised: January 1, 2012

## NOTICE

The information within this document is prepared by the City of Alpharetta Georgia Community Development Department, Inspections and Codes Enforcement Division, hereinafter referred to as "the City." The intent of this document is to reasonably inform our citizens, designers, developers, contractors, and the general public of the codes and laws related to commercial building construction in effect within the city and also to communicate the policies and procedures developed by the city over time to enforce these laws for safe and code compliant commercial construction.

This document is a building official interpreted "plain language" compilation of various sections of federal, state, county, and city building construction laws and the rules and regulations related to improving commercial property in the City. The information within is not all inclusive, nor is it designed to be, but rather presents a general overview of construction laws and processes relative to planning, permitting, constructing, inspecting, and completing a commercial construction project in the city.

For the purpose of this document, the following shall apply to the use of words and phrases: Words used in present tense include future tense. Words used in singular tense include plural tense. The word "he" also means "she." The words "shall" or "must" are always mandatory. The words "may" or "can" are permissive. The word "and" indicates all conditions, requirements, or factors so connected must be met or fulfilled, whereas the word "or" indicates that at least one condition, requirement, or factor so connected must be met. The word "structure" means anything that is built and includes the word "building." The word "person" means any individual, corporation, association, firm, partnership or other legal entity. The word "permit" means written governmental permission issued by an authorized official, empowering the holder thereof to do some act not forbidden by law, but not allowed without such authorization.

This document may be updated as codes, laws, rules, regulations, and policies change. This document has been prepared by the City of Alpharetta Building Official, and specific requirements and policies not mandated by law may be modified or waived by the Building Official. This and other construction related procedures may be accessed and downloaded at: **[www.alpharetta.ga.us](http://www.alpharetta.ga.us)**.

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## PREPARING FOR INSPECTIONS

**GENERAL:** The Building Official shall inspect, or cause to be inspected, at various intervals all construction or work for which a permit is required. Final inspections shall be made of every building, structure, mechanical, electrical, low voltage, plumbing, gas, energy conservation, or fire protection systems upon completion by the permittee and prior to the issue of a Certificate of Occupancy (CO) or a Certificate of Completion (CC) and any occupancy or use of the permitted work.

To expedite inspection approvals, the building official does recommend permit holders and contractors provide responsible construction representatives at inspection sites during inspections. Representatives should be prepared to answer inspector questions regarding the work to be inspected.

Permit holders and contractors should discuss inspection preparedness with inspectors at the start of work.

City inspectors are prohibited from entering and making any interior building inspections at occupied buildings without the permit holder, or property owner, or an authorized adult being present to grant premises entry and staying with the inspector at all times until the inspection has been completed.

**POSTING OF BUILDING PERMIT:** Work requiring a permit shall not be started until the permit holder posts the City issued building permit yard card in a conspicuous place at the front of the premises where the permitted work is to be done. **No Permit Yard Card Posted = No Inspections**

Permit yard cards must be accessible and readable from the public right-of-way and located in such a position as to permit City or other Authorized Fulton County or State of Georgia officials to conveniently view and make any required entries thereon.

Permit yard cards shall be maintained in position until all required final inspections have been approved and signed off on the yard card and the building, structure or system is ready for occupancy and use.

The permit holder is responsible for maintaining the permit yard card. All damaged, lost or stolen permit yard cards shall be replaced before further inspections can be made.

A \$35.00 administrative fee is charged for all replacement cards.

**EROSION INSPECTION:** No inspections will be made by City building or fire inspectors on any construction site not having "effective" soil erosion control measures in place, per *UDC §3.1*.

Site silt fences, rockered construction entrances, and other City Engineering Department required erosion control measures shall be constantly maintained in a good state of repair that effectively contains all site erosion within the site limits and out of State waterways and mud, silt, or other construction debris out of public streets and paved walkways.

City inspectors will not do requested inspections when, in their opinion, the site is in need of erosion control repair and violates *UDC §3.1*. Inspectors will simply leave a "Notice of Violation" on the permit yard card and will immediately leave the site without making the requested inspection.

It is the responsibility of the permit holder to notify City Engineering Department, **678-297-6200**, to obtain written erosion release on the site, regardless to whose fault erosion problems are attributed to.

No further building or fire inspections will be performed at a violation site until the permit holder notifies inspectors that City Engineering has released site erosion control by dated signature on the permit yard card or other means and that building and fire inspections may be resumed.

The permit holder may then request a desired building or fire reinspection, during normal inspection request hours of **7:30am - 9:00am**.

**REQUESTED INSPECTIONS:** It is the responsibility of the permit holder to prepare the work site for any requested inspections or other site inspection that may occur during the construction process.

## REQUESTING INSPECTIONS

The city makes every reasonable effort to provide permit holders **“same day”** inspection service.

In addition, City inspectors are **“cross certified”** to provide required multi-trade inspections by one inspector.

To effect this **“same day”** service policy, this Department requires the person **“in charge”** of all construction work on a site, usually the general contractor or his superintendent, to call in all inspections.

**Exception:** *Where only one trade is involved in an inspection, such as an outside “Sewer” inspection, the hired plumber or utility contractor may call in this inspection.*

It is the responsibility of the person **“in charge”**, normally the site superintendent, to coordinate all building and subcontractor trade work, so that all required work for a particular requested inspection is ready to be inspected when the inspector arrives on site.

*An example of this required coordination is a typical “Wall Cover” inspection; where wall framing is complete, plus all rough electrical wiring, plumbing piping, and HVAC ductwork located within the wall is complete, under required tests, and ready for inspection, prior to installing insulation and wall cover.*

All inspection requests shall be called in to the City Inspections Division at **678-297-6080**, between the hours of **7:30am – 9:00am**, on the same day that the inspection is desired.

**The City does not accept inspection requests at any other time.**

Callers will talk directly to inspectors and dependent upon inspector work loads, AM or PM inspections may be arranged, but never guaranteed.

**Note:** *Inspectors cannot ascertain in advance the kind of inspections or how many inspections will be called in during any given day. We make every reasonable effort to service as many customers as is possible every day, however our inspection service is only as good as your preparation for inspection.*

When requesting inspection, a building permit number, site street address, and type of inspection requested must be given to inspectors. Without this basic information, no inspection can be scheduled. **No Exception.**

## REINSPECTION POLICY & FEES

The city's reinspection policy for any inspection is explained as follows:

Current city reinspection policy is to charge a customer a \$25.00 reinspection fee, when inspectors have to return to a site for a second inspection of the same kind. The first inspection fee is covered under the original permit fee.

When inspectors must return to a site a third time for the same inspection kind, a reinspection fee of \$50.00 is charged.

Subsequent reinspections, fourth try, fifth try, etc., are charged a fee of \$100.00 per reinspection, until the inspection passes. Reinspection fees must be paid before reinspections will be made.

**Inspectors will normally cite up to six (6) code violations per inspection visit before deeming a site “Not Ready” for inspection.**

When sites are deemed “**Not Ready**” by the inspector, the inspection is stopped, the permit holder is issued a Notice of Violation normally stating the violations noted thus far during the inspection, plus the words “*Not Ready*” are affixed to the Notice.

If receiving a “*Not Ready*” Notice of Violation, contact the inspector, as advised in the *Requesting Inspections* section herein, and discuss the inspection. Inspectors will normally tell you what to do to prepare for inspection.

**Warning: Inspectors are not construction “Punch List” preparers.** If inspectors deem a permit holder is negligent in preparing for inspections and using inspectors to prepare Punch Lists, inspections will be suspended, the project will be placed in an “Inspections Hold” status, and permit holders are required to schedule a meeting with the Building Official for instructions to resolve inspection issues.

If a scheduled inspection is Failed, permit holders must correct noted violations and recall the inspection when ready, but not before the next workday, unless so directed by the inspector.

## MANDATORY BUILDING INSPECTIONS

**GENERAL:** The Building Official, upon notification from the permittee or his authorized agent, shall make the following building inspections and such other inspections as necessary and shall either release that portion of the construction by signature at the appropriate section on the permit yard, or shall notify the permit holder, or his agent, of any violations which must be corrected in order to comply with the codes, by issuing written "Notice of Violation" to the permittee and noting such on the yard card. Do not cover anything without city inspection and written approval.

**FOOTING:** To be made after plan detailed footings and trenches are excavated and cleaned; forms erected and supported; reinforcing is properly secured in place and supported; and before any concrete is placed.

**BUILDING SLAB PREP:** To be made after footings have been placed; underground Mechanical, Electrical, and Plumbing systems have been City inspected, approved, and properly backfilled; under-pin areas are excavated and clean; forms are erected and supported; plan required reinforcing steel is in place and supported; a four inch (4") minimum thickness rock base is in place at below grade slabs; a vapor barrier with joints lapped not less than six inches (6") is properly installed at heated areas, crack control measures, if required, are in place; and before any concrete is placed.

**MONO SLAB-PREP:** To be made after applicable underground Mechanical, Electrical, Low Voltage, and Plumbing (MELP) systems have been City inspected, approved, and properly backfilled; forms are erected and supported; plan required reinforcing is properly secured in place and supported; a four inch (4") minimum thickness rock base is in place at below grade slabs; a vapor barrier with joints lapped not less than six inches (6") is properly installed at all heated areas, crack control measures, if required, are in place; and before any concrete is placed.

**FOUNDATION:** -To be made after required wall reinforcement is in place and one side of concrete wall forms are secured in place, wall cavities are cleaned, and second side wall forms are ready to be placed; or all wall forms are in place and safe OSHA compliant scaffolding access is provided to all wall form tops for inspections, weep holes and piping sleeves are in place, and before any concrete is placed.

**WATER/DAMP-PROOFING & DRAINTILE** -A second inspection of building foundation walls, by City inspectors or other City authorized inspection agencies, shall be required to verify proper placement of wall water proofing or damp proofing and drain tile and rock and approved filtration material cover placement, as required by the engineered plans.

Where in new construction, a sub-grade foundation wall is installed, or where in renovation of an existing building a sub-grade area is converted to habitable space; a water proofing (in the case of habitable space use only) or damp proofing "Certificate of Compliance" to the manufacturer's recommended rate of sealing material application and technique is required to be submitted to the City building department by the authorized applicator, prior to the issue of a Certificate of Occupancy or Completion for the construction.

**WALL / CEILING COVER:** To be made after the roof is complete; all framing, bracing, fire and draft stops and blocking are effectively in place; exterior walls and gabled ends are sheathed and doors and windows are installed to effectively weather protect the structure interior; mechanical, electrical, and plumbing rough-ins at the area to be inspected are complete and under required tests; fuel burning appliance roughs are installed with flues and vents stubbed clear to the next level or area to be inspected or through the roof and weather capped; and before any insulation or wall or ceiling cover has been placed, except that walls may be one side covered so as to not restrict full wall cavity view for inspection.

Lay-in type ceiling grid support systems and "hard framed" ceiling access panels shall be in place and properly supported for this inspection.

**Note:** Large or multiple floor buildings over 15,000 sqft. in total area may be inspected in stages and partially approved for the continuation of construction at the building inspector's discretion.

**EXTERIOR SHEATHING:** This inspection is made prior to the Framing inspection and verifies the fastening of exterior sheathing, prior to covering sheathing with water resistant barriers.

**FRAMING** To be made after roof is complete; all framing, bracing, fire stops and blocking are effectively in place; exterior walls and gabled ends are covered with weather protective barriers and doors and windows are installed and sealed to effectively weather protect the structure interior; all mechanical, electrical, and plumbing rough-ins are complete and under required tests; fuel burning appliance roughs are installed with chimneys, flues and vents through exterior walls and roofs and weather capped to provide weather protection to all interior spaces and before any insulation or wall or ceiling cover has been placed.

**INSULATION:** To be made at various intervals during construction before finish cover is installed, but not before the area to be installed is weather protected and framing and roughs have been inspected and passed.

**GYPSON BOARD:** To be made after gypsum board is fastened in place, but before joints are mudded, taped, and finished.

**FIRE RESISTANT ASSEMBLIES, PENETRATIONS, & FINALS:** To be made at various intervals during construction as determined by City fire officials. Fire inspectors perform these inspections and normally refer to these inspections as 80% and 100% inspections.

Final Fire Inspection includes a detailed review and testing of all fire protection systems by fire officials and may be performed prior to, with, or after Final building inspection.

**BUILDING FINAL:** To be made after a building or structure is complete and ready for safe occupancy and use. Building, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing finals shall be made at the same time.

Prior to requesting a building final inspection a permit holder shall assure that all required subcontractor permits are in place and all required inspections and written approvals required prior to final inspections are signed off on the permit yard card.

All fire protection, egress, access, and other life safety final inspections must be complete and signed off by City fire inspectors on the permit yard card. This may be done prior to or after building Final Inspection.

All site work, walks, drives, paved areas, striping, Accessible routes / signage, landscaping, and other appurtenances or protectants listed on the approved plans for commercial work or as required by City adopted codes or other laws, as applicable, are completed, final inspected, and signed off on the permit yard card (left side) by the various Departments or Authorities listed and checked at building permit issue, or as required by all governing authorities. It is a sole responsibility of the permit holder to obtain all agency approvals prior to requesting any certificates of occupancy or use.



## MANDATORY MECHANICAL INSPECTIONS

**GENERAL:** The Building Official, upon notification from the permittee or his authorized agent, shall make the following mechanical inspections and such other inspections as necessary and shall either release that portion of the construction by signature at the appropriate section on the permit yard, or shall notify the permit holder, or his agent, of any violations which must be corrected in order to comply with the codes, by issuing written "Notice of Violation" to the permittee and noting such on the yard card. Do not cover anything without city inspection and written approval.

**UNDERSLAB MECHANICAL:** To be made after trenches or ditches are excavated, underground ducting, conduits and sleeves are installed and ready for test and before any backfill is put in place. After passing this inspection, backfill may be placed, but an additional building inspection is required before concrete is poured.

**WALL / CEILING COVER:** To be made with the wall / ceiling cover building inspection and after all HVAC equipment, ducting, duct insulation, piping, piping insulation, fire stops and fire dampers are installed, control wiring, or other concealed mechanical system components in the area to be inspected are in place, complete, supported properly, required pressure tests are applied, flues and vents are stubbed clear to the next level or area to be inspected or through the roof and weather capped; and before any wall / ceiling membranes are installed.

**ROUGH:** To be made with framing inspection and shall include items listed in Wall / Ceiling Cover above. Large or multiple floor buildings over 15,000 sqft. in total area may be inspected in stages and partially approved for the continuation of construction, at the inspector's discretion.

**GAS LINE:** To be made at various stages of construction, as follows:

To be made with wall / ceiling cover inspection and shall include all system piping from the point of delivery (gas meter) to within six feet (6') of and in the same room as all outlets or appliances that may be connected in the area to be inspected and shall include piping run stubouts to the next area to be inspected. The City requires a gas pressure test for this inspection, per 2006 IFGC 406. (see METERS below for additional testing required)

**METERS:** To be made after rough piping inspection and before the final inspection; when all HVAC and other gas fired appliances and equipment and controls are in place and ready for safe test operation; venting, vent connectors, and flues are installed into final position and supported; piping runs are complete to the final appliance connector or union connection at the appliance or equipment; all gas shut off valves are in place and in the "off" or closed position, with appliances or equipment disconnected; and the gas piping system is ready for public utility connection and testing.

The City requires a final gas pressure test at this inspection, per IFGC §406. The sole purpose of this Meters inspection is to allow the installer to check out all installed mechanical systems and equipment for proper and safe operation, per its listing, prior to the Final inspection.

**FINAL:** To be made with the building final inspection and after public utilities have been connected and all conditioned air systems and gas fired appliances are in full operation; all controls, compressors, condensate drains, insulation, ties and supports, and other system designed components are in place and final connected, all final trim and required labeling is in place, filters or other air purifying components are cleaned and in place, and all systems have been tested and balanced and the installation is ready for its intended use.

## MANDATORY ELECTRICAL INSPECTIONS

**GENERAL:** The Building Official, upon notification from the permittee or his authorized agent, shall make the following electrical inspections and such other inspections as necessary and shall either release that portion of the construction by signature at the appropriate section on the permit yard, or shall notify the permit holder, or his agent, of any violations which must be corrected in order to comply with the codes, by issuing written "Notice of Violation" to the permittee and noting such on the yard card. Do not cover anything without city inspection and written approval.

### **TEMPORARY POLE: *(Use is restricted to active construction sites and permitted temporary uses)***

To be made after a minimum 4x4 temporary electrical power pole has been set upright firmly into the ground with a minimum two feet (2') buried. Check with your electrical provider, Georgia Power or Sawnee EMC, for additional T-pole requirements, if applicable.

A grounding electrode system must be installed per 2011 NEC §250.50.

A weatherproof enclosure and meter base meeting the requirements of the local public utility power provider and 2011 NEC §230.51 shall be connected and firmly attached to the pole.

The City requires at least one (1) 115V/20A weatherproof duplex service outlet and one (1) 230V/30A service outlet to be installed at each temporary pole.

All outlets shall be GFCI protected per 2011 NEC §590.6.

**UNDERSLAB ELECTRICAL:** To be made after trenches or ditches are excavated, underground conduits, sleeves, or other devices are installed and before any backfill is put in place. Do not bury anything without inspection. After passing this inspection, backfill may be placed, but an additional inspection is required before placing concrete. See "Building Slab Prep" on Page 40.

**WALL / CEILING COVER:** To be made with the wall / ceiling cover building inspection of the area to be inspected and after all services and branch circuit distribution wiring that service that area is in place, boxes are secured, required conduit serving that area and conduit passing through that area to other areas to be inspected at a later date is in place and fastened properly, wiring is protected from physical damage, panel boards and switching gear servicing the area are set and secured to the structure with service and distribution wiring stubbed into their approved enclosures, disconnects are in place and secured, bonding and grounding rough wiring is stubbed out near its termination point, and before any wall or ceiling membranes are installed.

**ROUGH:** To be made with framing inspection and shall include items listed in Wall / Ceiling Cover above.

**Note:** Large or multiple floor buildings over 15,000 sqft. in total area may be inspected in stages and partially approved for the continuation of construction at the inspector's discretion.

**METERS:** To be made after framing and all wall coverings are in place and before final inspection; when all electrical service and control equipment is set, wired, fused, bonded and grounded, required disconnects are connected, all outlet devices and switch controls are connected, lighting fixtures, appliances, and equipment are set or boxed out and ready for safe operation, and the electrical system is ready for connection to public utilities.

The sole purpose of a Meters inspection is to allow the installer to check out all installed electrical systems and equipment for proper and safe operation prior to Final inspection.

**LOW VOLTAGE:** To be made with the wall / ceiling cover inspection, as applicable to the type of construction, where low voltage wiring systems are to be concealed; or with the meters inspection, where low voltage wiring systems are to be surface mounted.

Where concealed, inspection shall include review of distribution wiring / cable types, rating, boxes, connections, wiring protection from physical damage, grounding, bonding, disconnects, control panel enclosures, and other system components.

Where surface mounted, inspection shall include review of raceway types and mounting, wire fills to manufacturer's specifications, connection points (must be open to view, except that plug-in types shall be connected), grounding and bonding, disconnects, outlets and plugs, control panel cabinets or enclosures, and other system components.

**IRRIGATION:** To be made when all irrigation system wiring and conduit is in place; control panels, transformers, and their enclosures are mounted; junction boxes and splice points are open to view, high voltage power wiring is in place and GFCI protected, and the system is ready for safe operation.

GFCI protection for irrigation system wiring and controls is mandatory and may be provided by direct plug and cord connection from the transformer primary to a GFCI protected wall outlet or hard wired from the primary to a disconnect that is protected by a GFCI breaker located at the electrical panel.

**FINAL:** To be made with the building Final inspection, after all public utilities have been connected and all installed electrical systems are in full operation; all equipment, motors, appliances, fixtures, controls, guards, and other related systems have been labeled, tested, and balanced and the completed electrical installation is ready for its intended use.

Commercial outdoor lighting must meet the Night Sky requirements of Alpharetta's Green Communities Ordinance.

## MANDATORY PLUMBING INSPECTIONS

**GENERAL:** The Building Official, upon notification from the permittee or his authorized agent, shall make the following plumbing inspections and such other inspections as necessary and shall either release that portion of the construction by signature at the appropriate section on the permit yard, or shall notify the permit holder, or his agent, of any violations which must be corrected in order to comply with the codes, by issuing written "Notice of Violation" to the permittee and noting such on the yard card. Do not cover anything without city inspection and written approval.

**UNDERSLAB PLUMBING:** To be made after trenches or ditches are excavated and all under slab drainage and water service and distribution piping and sleeves and protectants are installed and under tests required by *2006 IPC §312* and before any backfill is placed. After passing this inspection, backfill may be placed, but an additional inspection is required before placing concrete.

**SEWER TAP:** To be made any time during construction, but before METERS inspection.

This is an open trench inspection of gravity sewer piping for proper bedding, fall, materials, fittings, cleanouts, and connection to the public or site approved sewer disposal system.

All piping shall be under test for this inspection as required by *2006 IPC §312*.

For sites with public sewer systems, this inspection includes exterior sewer piping from foundation edge to and including connection to the public sewer.

For sites with private sewerage systems, this inspection includes exterior sewer piping from foundation edge to inlet connection at the septic tank or other holding vessel.

All private sewer systems must be inspected and approved by the permit issuing authority, prior to Final plumbing inspection.

For sites with grease trap systems, this inspection includes exterior sewer piping from foundation edge to inlet connection at grease trap and continues from the outlet connection of the test manhole to the public sewer connection the septic tank or other holding vessel.

**All private sewer systems must be inspected and approved by the permit issuing authority, prior to Final plumbing inspection.** The permit holder has sole responsibility for obtaining these approvals.

**WALL / CEILING COVER:** To be made with the building wall / ceiling cover inspection and after all drainage, waste, vent, and water service and distribution piping is in place at the area to be inspected and stubouts are installed to the next area to be inspected, all piping and fixture roughs are properly fastened into place and protected from physical damage.

All concealed fixture connections shall be made, rated assemblies installed and fire safed, concealed piping insulation installed, rough trim boxes, enclosures, access panels or vaults are secured in place, boots and flashings are installed, pressure tests per *2006 IPC §312* are applied, and before any wall or ceiling membranes are installed.

**ROUGH:** To be made with framing inspection and shall include items listed in Wall / Ceiling Cover above.

**GAS LINE:** To be made at various stages of construction, as follows:

To be made with wall / ceiling cover inspection and shall include all system piping from the point of delivery (gas meter) to within six feet (6') of and in the same room as all outlets or appliances that may be connected in the area to be inspected and shall include piping run stubouts to the next area to be inspected. The City requires a gas pressure test for this inspection, per 2006 IGC 406. (see METERS below for additional testing required)

**Note 1:** Gas piping to be buried must first undergo an "open trench" inspection. Pipe joints, couplings, transition fittings, legs, drips, or any other appurtenances must be inspected before being covered.

**Note 2:** Large or multiple floor buildings over 15,000 sq. ft. in total area may be inspected in stages and partially approved for the continuation of construction at the inspector's discretion.

**BACK FLOW:** To be made prior to or with the final plumbing inspection and shall include inspection of all water system required backflow prevention measures per IPC 312.9 and other state, county, and local laws.

**Note:** Building inspectors do not make this inspection. Only Georgia Certified Backflow Testers perform these tests. For information regarding this testing and to obtain a list of certified testers, Call Georgia Water and Pollution Control Association (GW&PCA) at 770-618-8690 or e-mail [info@gwpca.org](mailto:info@gwpca.org). Their website is: [www.gwpca.org](http://www.gwpca.org).

Written certification of successful Back Flow Testing must be presented to building officials prior to the issue of a Certificate of Occupancy.

**IRRIGATION:** To be made with the final inspection and shall include inspection of the irrigation system backflow prevention devices, system shutoff valves, and approved ground vaults in place to protect both the public and private structure's domestic water system.

Written certification of successful irrigation system Back Flow Testing must be presented to building officials prior to the issue of a Certificate of Completion for the irrigation system.

**FINAL:** To be made with the building final inspection, after all public utilities have been connected and all plumbing fixtures are properly secured in place, properly trapped and connected to the drainage system; properly valved, protected against back siphon and connected to the potable water system; all water piping and other plumbing devices and appliances are connected, valved, vented, pressure & back flow protected, secured in place, insulated and sealed as applicable; and the completed plumbing system installation is cleaned, tested, and working properly and is ready for its intended safe use.

At the final inspection, the installed fixtures must be the same as shown on the approved Water Conservation Report.

## **VIOLATIONS & MORE**

Violations of building codes, construction regulations, and City laws are misdemeanors and violators may, in certain cases, be prosecuted to the fullest extent allowed by law.

Most violations occurring during permitted construction are usually processed by City inspectors issuing a builder a simple notice of violation (**Red-Tag**) and posting it on the permit yard card. The builder corrects the noted violations, recalls the inspection, the inspection passes, and construction continues undelayed.

There are some violations related to construction that are more serious in nature and that can cause expensive repairs, temporary or permanent termination of construction, or severe consequences to a violator's construction rights within the city.

### **The three most common violations of this more serious nature are:**

1. Starting construction without required permits. (*Violation SBC §104.1.*)
2. Covering work without required inspections. (*Violation SBC §105.7.*)
3. Not calling and passing Final Inspection and obtaining a Certificate of Occupancy for the work, prior to occupancy or use of the permitted construction. (*Violation SBC §106.1*)

The City does not process these three violations with a typical Red-Tag violation issued by a building inspector, but rather processes these violations by issuing Stop Work Orders. (*See Stop Work Orders, Page 53*)

### **Starting Construction Without Permits:**

1. Construction found being built without first having city permits will be issued Stop Work Orders.
2. Stop Work Orders will be posted on site and state “**Violation SBC §104.1 – Work Without Permit**” or “**Violation UDC 4.4.5.A – Work Without Permit**”, as it is also a violation of the City Unified Development Code (UDC) to start any construction without a city required building permit, and will advise the property owner and contractor to contact the building official.
3. If workmen are on the violation site, they will be ordered to stop all work and leave immediately. If resisting this order, police assistance will be called immediately and violators may be arrested.
4. Continuing construction on a site posted with a Stop Work Order will result to City officers issuing the contractor and/or the homeowner a “**Summons to Appear**” before the city Municipal Court to answer violation charges.
5. The Stop Work Order will remain in effect at the violation site until released by the Building Official.

### **Covering Work Without Required Inspections:**

1. Sites found covering work without required inspections will be issued Stop Work Orders.

**Examples:** Covering work without required inspections are; concreting footings without first passing a Footing inspection, or installing drywall without first passing a Rough & Framing inspection.

2. Stop Work Orders will be posted on site and will state ***“Violation SBC §105.7 – Work Covered Without Required Inspection”*** and will advise the property owner and contractor to contact the building official.
3. If workmen are on the violation site, they will be ordered to stop all work and leave immediately. If resisting this order, police assistance will be called and violators may be arrested.
4. Continuing construction on a site posted with a Stop Work Order will result to City officers issuing the contractor and/or the property owner a ***“Summons to Appear”*** before the city Municipal Court to answer violation charges.
5. The Stop Work Order will remain in effect at the violation site until released by the building official.

### **Failure To Request & Pass Final Inspection & Obtain A Certificate of Occupancy (CO) For Work.**

1. Building sites found occupied and being used by occupants, without having first passed a city Final inspection and being issued a Certificate of Occupancy, will be issued Stop Work Orders.

**Note:** It is a responsibility of the contractor and the property owner to assure a Final inspection is passed and a Certificate of Occupancy is issued by the City, prior to using any structure.

2. Stop Work Orders will be posted on site and will state ***“Violation SBC §106.1 - Occupied – No CO Issued”*** and will advise the contractor and property owner to contact the building official.

**Note:** The building official will order immediate cessation of use in the interest of life safety, until the structure undergoes and passes a Final inspection to codes compliance.

3. Continued use of a structure on a site posted with a Stop Work Order will result to City officers issuing the contractor and the property owner a ***“Summons to Appear”*** before the city Municipal Court to answer violation charges.
4. The Stop Work Order will remain in effect at the violation site until released by the building official.

## **PENALTIES**

Because of the life safety and property liability issues presented when structures are built without permits, work is covered without inspections, and structures are used without final inspections and certificates of occupancy being issued, which are all building code and city law violations; the City enforces strong penalties to discourage these actions and protect the health and welfare of the public.

For any violation regarding “**performing work without first having a permit**”; normal permit fees are assessed a 100% penalty fee, in addition to normal permit fees, per *SBC §104.1*.

In addition, violation sites shall remain in a Stop Work status, until released by the building official.

### **First Violation:**

1. Violation sites shall remain in a Stop Work status until the cited violation is corrected, inspected, and approved by city inspectors.

Exception: **Violation trade repairmen and P.E. testing forces only may make required repairs and tests as required and prior approved by the building official.**

2. Violators’ permitting rights, which are normally unrestricted, are placed into a city imposed “*Permitting Probationary Status*” for a period of one year from the date of violation discovery.

If at any time during the probationary period, violators are found violating the same previous cited code section, the violators’ city permitting rights may immediately be revoked for cause, by the building official.

The building official will notify violators in writing of the above violation charges and conditions.

### **Second Violation:** *(Same offense within one year probationary period.)*

1. Violators’ permitting rights may be immediately revoked, effective the date of violation discovery.
2. Violators may be issued a ***Summons to Appear*** before the Municipal Court to answer violation charges.
3. The violation site may remain in a Stop Work Order status until the Municipal Court holds a public hearing and renders decisions regarding violation charges.
4. Violators’ permitting rights may not be restored until so ordered by the building official.
5. The Stop Work Order shall not be released until so ordered by the building official.

In addition to the above, violators may be subject to severe fines, imprisonment, both, or other penalties as ordered by the court.



**Third Violation:** *(Same offense within one year probationary period.)*

1. Violators' permitting rights may be immediately revoked by the building official for a period of time not less than one year, effective the date of violation discovery.
2. Violators may be issued a **Summons to Appear** before the Municipal Court to answer violation charges.
3. The violation site may remain in a Stop Work Order status until the Municipal Court holds a public hearing and renders decisions regarding the violation charges.
4. Violators' city permitting rights may not be restored until so ordered by the building official.
5. The Stop Work Order shall not be released until so ordered by the building official.

In addition to the above, violators may be punished by fines of up to \$1,000.00 per day or by imprisonment of up to 120 days, or both, or to labor on the streets, sidewalks, squares, or other public works for a period not exceeding 120 days, or by fine, imprisonment, or alternative sentencing as provided by law.

## **APPEALS**

Any owner, contractor, subcontractor, or their authorized agent receiving notice from the building official may appeal a decision of the building official. Appeals must be in writing and must be received in this department within 15 days of receipt of notice. Appeals must be addressed to the Director, Department of Community Development, 287 South Main Street, Alpharetta, GA. 30009.

The appeal notice must state the location of the property in violation, the date of the Notice or Order received, and the number of the Notice or Order received. The appeal must state the relief requested, the reason therefore, the hardship or conditions upon which the appeal is made, and must be signed by the appellant.

## **ADDITIONAL INSPECTIONS**

**GENERAL:** Additional site, building, mechanical, electrical, low voltage, plumbing, or fire inspections may be required as determined by building and fire officials to insure compliance to building and fire codes and other related City, county, and state rules and regulations or laws.

Site inspections are required for all construction projects where land has been disturbed prior to issuing a Certificate of Occupancy or Completion for the permitted work.

Site conditions are normally inspected by City Engineering Department personnel at or near the end of construction. Engineering inspectors will check the site for proper drainage, erosion control measures, landscaping and tree save requirements, and final condition of curb cuts, driveways, and side walks.

Items found to be incomplete, inadequate, damaged, broken, or otherwise not in compliance to City requirements must be completed and repaired to the satisfaction of all governing authorities.

In addition, inspections may be required by other governing authorities, who either at the planning, permitting, or during the course of construction have imposed regulatory issues to be resolved prior to Final approval.

Typical examples of these regulatory issues are Development, Zoning, Variance Compliance, City Boards, Health and Welfare, Property or Personal Liability, Financial, Arbitration or Court Order issues, etc..

No Certificate of Occupancy or Completion for permitted construction can be issued until all regulatory issues are resolved to the satisfaction of the building official.

## **THIRD PARTY INSPECTIONS & REPORTS**

Some jurisdictions allow permit holders to hire private inspectors or engineers to perform code mandated inspections that their inspectors may not be qualified to do or cannot do in a timely manner, per Georgia law.

All City inspectors are codes certified and inspections are normally performed on the same day requested.

The City does not accept any written or verbal third party inspection certifications or approval reports for required inspections in lieu of City inspections without prior approval of the Building Official.

Sometimes construction conditions warrant opinions and guidance counsel of professional engineers or architects on how to proceed with codes compliant construction.

Typical examples of these needs are when poor soils conditions are encountered that prohibit installing foundations in a normal fashion; or when tall walls or complex load bearing framing problems arise, etc..

When these or similar conditions are encountered, builders, owners, and City inspectors will normally briefly discuss conditions and inspectors will require a builder or owner to hire an engineer for guidance.

When this occurs, the City expects the hired engineer to visit the site, evaluate problems, offer options, and provide written professionally sealed repair orders to bring the construction into codes compliance.

The City also requires the reporting engineer to provide the building official with copy of the repair orders for codes compliance review and signature. The City reserves the right to reject reports for reasonable cause.

When the building official releases the repair order by signature, the builder or owner is required to follow the repair order in strict detail and City inspection is required prior to covering any repair or pouring any concrete.

The reporting engineer or architect is required to make such repair inspections as he/she deems necessary, but may not approve covering repairs or approve construction to move beyond a point of written City approval.

## **WRITTEN RELEASE**

Construction normally proceeds in steps or stages, usually predetermined by the various mandated inspections sections included in this document. Steps may vary dependent upon the scope of work to be done and at the discretion of the building official.

**The important thing to remember when doing permitted construction in the City is to not cover anything up that has not been visually inspected and approved in writing by City inspectors.**

If you cover work without written City approval, the City will make you uncover the work for inspection, as determined by the inspector, Building Official, or a court of law. **No Exceptions.**

City inspectors and building officials will not approve any construction steps deemed necessary by the scope of work or the building official without first visually inspecting the work for codes compliance.

Work shall not be done on any part of a building or structure, or any mechanical, electrical, low voltage, plumbing, fuel gas, energy conservation, fire prevention, or other system beyond the point indicated in each successive inspection step without first obtaining a written release from building, fire, or other officials noted on the permit yard card or approved plans for that inspected work, as applicable.

Such written release shall be entered by inspectors on the permit yard card or approved plans and release shall be given only after visual inspection has been made of each successive step in the construction or installation as indicated by each of the foregoing inspections.

**If you want to know if you passed an inspection; - Visually Check your permit yard card for sign-offs.**

Work proceeding beyond the City written release point, regardless to reason or fault, shall be removed or uncovered or tested to the acceptance of building or fire officials or both.

No further inspections or written releases of construction shall be made, nor shall any Certificate of Occupancy or Certificate of Completion be issued for any construction, until the permit holder or property owner demonstrates codes compliance to the satisfaction of the building official.

## STOP WORK ORDERS

Stop Work Orders are legal notices to immediately cease and desist all ongoing construction work on a property and to immediately and safely secure all hazardous perils to life and property on the site and to safely evacuate all work forces in an immediate orderly fashion.

Stop Work Orders are issued by City officials or other regulatory agencies and respected by all City departments.

Stop Work Orders are legally binding at issue and contractors and owners failing to immediately comply to a Stop Work Order and conditions stated thereon, will be issued a **Summons to Appear** for a public hearing in front of the City's Code Enforcement Board or Municipal Court to answer violation charges.

Stop Work Orders are the property of the City and shall not be removed from their posted location without written permission from the issuing official, under penalty of law.

**The City will prosecute Stop Work Order violators to the fullest extent allowed by law.**

## CERTIFICATES OF OCCUPANCY & COMPLETION

Certificates of Occupancy and Certificates of Completion, hereinafter referred to as CO's and CC's, are building code required official documents issued by the building official to permit holders or property owners at the completion of construction that has been validly permitted through the Building Division.

CO's and CC's officially attest that the permitted construction has undergone all required inspections for compliance to building and technical codes and other applicable city, county, or state laws in effect at the time of permit issue and has been released for its intended safe use by the building official.

***Note:*** CO's and CC's are normally required by lending institutions and insurance carriers, prior to committing to permanent financing or providing insurance policies for completed construction.

CO's are issued for construction that is intended for human habitation, such as dwelling units or buildings.

CC's are issued for construction that is not intended for human habitation, such as pools, garages, or site walls.

CO's and CC's will not be issued for any construction not permitted through the City's Building Division.

Fire Department officials cannot issue CO's or CC's for work permitted through the City's Building Division.

There is no additional fee for CO's or CC's, as fees for these documents were included at permit issue.

## Obtaining CO's & CC's

To obtain a CO or CC at the end of construction, the permit holder or property owner must;

1. Pass all Final building and subcontractor inspections. *(Inspectors will sign yard cards when done)*
2. Obtain other City Department Final inspection signatures, as noted on the permit yard card at permit issue or during the course of construction. – i.e. – *Erosion, Civil, Arborist, Planning, Zoning, etc..*
3. Obtain other governing authority Final inspection signatures or provide release documents, as noted on the permit yard card at permit issue or during the course of construction. – i.e. – *Fulton County Sewer, Backflow, Grease Trap, Health Dept., Ga. Dept. of Labor Elevator & Boiler, etc..*
4. Proceed in person to the City Building Division offices during normal permit issue hours and present the building official with a completed and signed building permit yard card.

**Note:** *At this point, building officials will verify all signatures and copy the yard card and all documentation presented; check permit records to assure all subcontractor permits are in order; check for any liens, holds, or notices of record; and check for any unpaid fees or other issues to be resolved prior to CO or CC issue.*

*It is the responsibility of the permit holder or property owner to resolve any issues presented during final review of all construction documentation.*

*When all construction documentation is in order, all fees have been paid, and all issues resolved to the satisfaction of the building official, a CO or CC will be printed for required final signatures.*

5. Sign required owner or contractor construction liability statements on the CO or CC.
6. Obtain the building official's signature releasing the construction identified upon the CO or CC.

**The issue of a CO or CC officially ends a permitted construction project in the City.**

## TEMPORARY CERTIFICATES OF OCCUPANCY & COMPLETION

The codes recognize that unexpected delays can occur near the end of construction that will affect it to such a degree that it is impossible or impractical to have everything completed on a specific date that the construction has been promised or scheduled for a loan closing or other similar occasion.

When such delays occur, the codes allow the building official discretionary authority to issue Temporary Certificates of Occupancy or Completion, hereinafter referred to as TCO's and TCC's, under certain circumstances and agreements and only if the site, building, structure, or area thereof is substantially complete (95%) and reasonably safe for the occupants to use in the opinion of the building official.

TCO's and TCC's, when approved by the building official, may be issued for a maximum time period of ninety (90) calendar days from the date of issue, but no longer than is reasonably necessary.

It shall be the sole responsibility of the permit holder or property owner to complete all unfinished work and request and pass Final Inspection of all construction and obtain a CO or CC prior to expiration of the TCO or TCC. Failure to obtain a CO or CC within the time allowed will result to prosecution by the City.

**To obtain a TCO or TCC, the permit holder or property owner is required to:**

1. Make written request to the building official for a TCO or TCC. If the request is not from the property owner, include the notarized counter-signature of the property owner on the request.
2. Identify the construction by permit number and include the site street address, project name, etc..
3. State the time limits requested for the TCO or TCC.
4. State the basis on which the TCO or TCC should be issued and identify all uncompleted construction.
5. Identify limits of areas to be used and include a summary of occupant safety measures to be employed.
6. Include an executed Construction Performance Completion Bond made payable to the City of Alpharetta for each TCO or TCC requested. *(Sample Bond Form included in this documentation)*
7. Include a standard \$200.00 fee for each TCO or TCC requested.

Construction Performance Completion Bonds must be issued by a Surety licensed under current Georgia law. A separate bond shall be required for each building permit issued. Each bond issued shall be in the amount of at least 1.5 times (150%) of the reasonably estimated dollar amount required to complete all construction to codes compliance and City approved construction documents. In no case shall any bond be less than fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000.00) U.S. Currency for each TCO or TCC requested. Terms of execution shall be bound directly to each requested TCO or TCC as provided by Georgia law.

**No TCO shall be issued to any site not having a Fulton County approved sanitary sewerage system or approved potable water backflow prevention system in place. In addition, No TCO or TCC will be issued to any site having unresolved life safety issues or property liability damage issues.**

Regardless of reasons for requesting TCO's or TCC's, all permit holders and property owners are advised that the building official will not consider, nor issue, any TCO or TCC to any site, building, structure, or construction, or area thereof that is deemed "Unsafe" or that presents any "Life Safety Hazard" to the occupants or users thereof in the opinion of building inspectors, fire inspectors, or the Building Official.

The issue of a TCO or TCC does not officially end a permitted construction project in the City.

## **ADDITIONAL CITY CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS**

**TEMPORARY TOILET FACILITIES:** Per *UDC 4.4.5.G* -All construction sites within the City shall be provided with temporary sanitary nonsewered (portable) toilet facilities for worker use during construction and such toilets shall remain in place until access to permanent sanitary toilets are provided on site.

For multifamily and commercial sites, the developer or general contractor must obtain a Non Sewered Toilet System (NSTS) permit from Fulton County Health Department stipulating the minimum number of portable toilets required on the project.

**Note:** Contact Fulton County Health Department at **404-332-1801** for NSTS information.

Inspections will not be made without portable toilets or permanent toilets being in place and in a sanitary condition, as required.

The developer or general contractor of a permitted construction site shall be responsible for providing and maintaining required toilet facilities throughout the duration of construction.

**STRUCTURAL FILL AND BACKFILL:** Per *UDC 4.4.5.H* -Materials used for structural fill and backfill under and directly adjacent to buildings, drives, and walks and for backfill behind foundation and retaining walls shall be unfrozen, unsaturated natural soils, clean and free of organic matter, silt, large rocks or stones, or foreign matter and debris.

Additional backfill materials used may be course gravel, crushed natural stone, or sand free of silt, loam or soluble materials, or any combination of the above. Structural fills or backfill shall not be placed on subgrades that contain frost, mud, or are frozen.

In lieu of specific written direction and supervision by a Georgia licensed professional architect or engineer, fills shall be placed and compacted in loose layers of 6"-12" thickness and shall be compacted using sheepsfoot rollers, vibrating tampers, or other compaction equipment suitable to obtain the required density throughout the entire layer being compacted.

Fills and backfill shall be installed systematically and as early as is possible to allow for natural settlement and shall not be placed over wet, spongy, or porous subgrade materials.

**CUT OR FILL SLOPES:** Per *UDC 4.4.5.H* – The top or bottom of any cut or fill slope in excess of one foot vertical rise to three foot of horizontal run (1:3) shall not be located any closer than two feet (2') horizontal measure from the edge of drives, walks, paved areas, or retaining wall top or toe of wall.

The two foot (2') area adjacent to drives, walks, paved areas, tops or toes of retaining walls shall be graded at a plus or minus (+/-) 2% slope (1/4"/ft.) and where feasible shall slope away from the paved surfaces and walls.

**SITE WALL SAFETY BARRIERS:** Any portions of site retaining walls over four feet (4') in height, as measured from the top of wall to the exposed lower toe of wall, must be provided with a continuous safety barrier mounted at or immediately adjacent to the top of the wall at reasonably accessible areas.

Safety barriers shall be of substantial construction for the prevention of access, must be at least thirty six inches (36") in height, as measured from grade at the base of the barrier to the top of the barrier, and may be man made or vegetative in nature.

When vegetative barriers are used, they shall be of substantial maturity and density, at the time of Final building inspection, to prevent reasonable access to the top of the wall.

## **CONSTRUCTION WORKING HOURS.**

The City Noise Ordinance limits construction and demolition activity in the city and is enforced by the city police department, as follows.

**Permitted Construction and Demolition activity is allowed during the following hours only:**

|                              |                                |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Monday through Friday</b> | <b>7:00 AM – 7:00 PM</b>       |
| <b>Saturday</b>              | <b>9:00 AM – 5:00 PM</b>       |
| <b>Sunday &amp; Holidays</b> | <b>Construction Prohibited</b> |

**Exception:** Emergencies and other construction activity pre-approved by the police chief on a case by case basis. Contact police headquarters at 678-297-6300 for more information.



## CHANGES TO PLANS AFTER PERMITTING

Often, changes are made to building plans and systems after a permit has been obtained and work has started. If these changes involve code issues, please submit three sets of plans, detailing the revisions, to the Building Division so that the changes may be reviewed for code compliance before the changes are actually constructed in the field. After the changes have passed plan review, the city-stamped job site plans must be brought to the office, where a representative of the architect or contractor will insert the stamped, revised sheets into the job site plans. If an inspector notices that changes have been made to the building and the building does not match the city-stamped job site plan set, **the inspection fails and reinspection cannot be made until the correct reviewed, stamped plans are available to the inspector at the jobsite.** The fee for reviewing plan changes is \$50.00. For extremely small or extremely large revisions, the fee may be waived, or increased, at the discretion of the plan examiner or building official.

Submit all revisions which might have code implications, including, but not limited to, structural, electrical, mechanical, plumbing, fire safety, egress, accessibility, occupancy, etc. Do not submit changes which do not have code implications, such as change of interior colors, change of cabinet hardware, etc.

If the exterior of a new building has been approved by the Alpharetta Design Review Board, no changes may be made to the exterior without first obtaining approval from the Planning & Zoning division of Alpharetta Community Development at 678-297-6070.